

Community Services and Recreation
DRAFT MINUTES/UNAPPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Re: Commission Meeting November 5, 2013

Meeting was called to order at 5:28pm.

Attendance:

Present: Ron Bathrick, Kristen Brandt, Lou Criscuolo, Kim Karlin, Donna Malley, Chris Orris, Michelle Spader.

Absent: Marc Fasano, Paul Kottage.

Staff: Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation
Maggie Goodwin, LCSW, Program Manager, Clinical Services, BHCare
Carla Riccio, Secretary

1. Acceptance of Minutes of the meeting held on September 3, 2013:

At the September 3rd meeting under New Business, under the discussion of *Proposed Idea for Utilization of Food Bank funds*, food items such as milk, bread, eggs and produce were referred to as non-perishable food items. Lou Criscuolo clarified that these items should be referenced as *perishable* items.

Lou Criscuolo made a motion to accept the Minutes of the September 3, 2013 meeting as corrected, seconded by Michelle Spader.

2. Correspondence:

None.

3. Old Business

None.

4. New Business:

a. Director's Report:

Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Community Services:

Energy Assistance: The 2013-2014 energy assistance season started on *Monday, October 7th*. 107 applications have been completed season to date (compared to last year: approx. 90 applications). Appointments for North Haven residents are available on Mondays (1-4pm) and Wednesdays (9am-12pm) in the Community Services office, located in the Town Hall Annex Building, 5 Linsley St.

Monetary Donations: Mr. Swinkoski reported no monetary contributions received in October 2013.

Food Donations: Mr. Swinkoski reported that 24 bags/ 15 boxes of food donated in October 2013.

Food Disbursements: 279 meals were distributed (31 = people) in October 2013.

2013 Holiday Season of Giving: The Holiday food distribution schedule has been determined: Thanksgiving food distribution is scheduled for Monday 11/25 & Tuesday 11/26 from 1-4pm. As of the meeting, 12 households have already signed up. Mr. Swinkoski also reported that holiday food distribution has been scheduled for Wednesday 12/18 & Thursday 12/19 from 1-4pm. Food distribution is available for North Haven residents who must show proof of residency.

Lastly it was reported by Mr. Swinkoski that the Holiday toy selection appointment schedule has been determined. Appointments will be available Monday, December 16th through Friday December 20th from 9am-4pm. Residents will be able to call starting the day after Thanksgiving to schedule their appointment. Appointments will be available in 30-minute increments. The Toy Selection Program is intended for income eligible North Haven families with children ages 18 and under. There is a limit set at 4 gifts maximum per child. Families must present a driver license or photo ID and complete a one page application upon arrival.

Emergency Assistance Requests: A discussion took place regarding whether the guidelines for the Emergency Fund needed to be revised to limit the frequency that a household can apply for assistance. The question had been brought to the Commission for discussion because it has been noted in reviewing the data that certain households apply for Emergency assistance every year, almost to the exact day. The pattern has raised the question as to whether some of these households have created a calculated “emergency” (i.e. allow themselves to run out of oil), in order to get the 100 gallons of oil that the Town can provide to income eligible families. The question at hand was while some households appear to have valid emergencies, are others creating their own “emergency”, or even possibly providing a false statement that they have an emergency? A lengthy discussion took place among the commission as to ways to possibly fine tune the application process in order to ensure that deserving households continue to be assisted with Town Emergency funds.

It was recommended and agreed upon by the Commission that a clause needs to be added to the current Emergency Assistance guidelines. This clause will indicate that the Town reserves the right to verify the accuracy of an emergency assistance request (i.e. that a household’s oil tank is empty). Thus, spot checks may be arranged by the Town with the oil company delivering the emergency fuel. If it is discovered that the household provided a false statement on their emergency application, the household will forfeit the right to emergency assistance moving forward.

Kristen Brandt made a motion that a clause be added to the Emergency Fund guidelines indicating that the Town reserves the right to have a representative from the oil company verify the requesting household’s oil tank is empty; and if found that the tank is not empty, the household will be disqualified the program moving forward. Motion seconded by Chris Orris. All were in favor.

Youth Services:

Prescription Take Back-October 26, 2013: Mr. Swinkoski reported that this event collected 4,138 controlled substances which equals a street value of over \$82,000.

Merchant Training: Mr. Swinkoski reported that a “TIPS” training (Training for Intervention Procedures) for establishments that sell/serve alcohol took place at North Haven Police Department.

Mental Health First Aide Training: Additionally, a Mental Health First Aid Training was held for Town employees by the Apt Foundation. Mr. Swinkoski reported that seven Town employees are now certified “Mental Health First Aiders.”

Counseling:

Update from Maggie Goodwin, LCSW, Program Manager, Clinical Services, BHCare:

Before providing the Commission with a summary of services since the last meeting, Ms. Goodwin provided an overview of the organizational structure of BHCare, how they work in partnership with the Town, the staff within the clinic and the breadth of services that they offer to Town residents.

Ms. Goodwin shared that the current client census at the Town of North Haven Counseling Center has been approximately 175 clients at one time through the summer months. The clients receive individual, family, couples therapy and/or group counseling as well as medication management based on a treatment plan as needed. Groups running this quarter include an ongoing men’s transition group, a women’s process group, a medication symptom/ med management group, and a time limited relapse prevention group and time limited support group for clients dealing with chronic medical illness. This month the relapse prevention group will begin on an ongoing basis again and the holiday support group and mindfulness training group will restart in addition to the three ongoing groups.

The clinic has made numerous referrals of both clients and residents for psychiatric and substance abuse hospitalizations or intensive outpatient programs over the summer. Ms. Goodwin indicated that she continues to respond to intervention requests from residents and other town agencies and has made home visits, outreach calls or facilitated in-clinic resource and referral sessions with more than 11 clients over the summer. In addition she continues to work closely with the Senior Center Director, Judy Amarone, in reaching out and serving elderly residents and their families in times of difficult life transitions.

BHcare continues to offer benefits assistance services and information and referral for town residents once a month. More than 20 residents attended the walk-in sessions over the summer. In addition, 10 clients currently work with BHcare vocational services counselor on site weekly, and approximately 10 clients receive weekly in home case management services. In addition, the BHCare staff as well as North Haven Community Services staff have been actively trying to assist clients with the many questions about health insurance changes, coverage for Husky and the Affordable Care Act eligibility.

Ms. Goodwin discussed how the clinic continues to try to maximize the revenue for the town by billing clients insurance and monitoring the individual sliding fee scale for the uninsured and underinsured. The clinic continues to assist clients in getting updated insurance information and bills for Medicare, Medicaid and the private insurances for the services delivered at the clinic.

Lastly Ms. Goodwin reported that the clinic staff are preparing for the state Department of Public Health’s clinic licensing visit required to renew the clinic’s Mental Health Clinic license. The license is up for renewal in December and they will do an unannounced visit before that time.

b. Finance Report:

Mr. Swinkoski distributed budget reports for (year ending October 2013) to the Commission for their review and welcomed any questions.

Community Services: YTD snapshot of Community Services expenditures:
27.5% of budget expended.

Welfare: YTD snapshot of Welfare expenditures:
13% of budget expended YTD.

Senior Center: YTD snapshot of Senior Center expenditures:
26% of budget expended YTD.

Additionally, reports of the Emergency Fund (Fund 204) and the Outreach Fund (Fund 304) ending October 2013 were also distributed to the Commission for their review.

Emergency Fund (Fund 204): as of 10/31/2013:

Food: YTD Balance \$12,954.91

Fuel: YTD Balance \$9,807.81

Misc: YTD Balance \$36,165.24

Toys: YTD Balance \$1,266.92 (plus an additional \$600.00 in Toys R'Us gift cards)

Outreach Fund (Fund 304): as of 10/31/2013:

Service Outreach: YTD Balance: \$5,656.44

Project Graduation: YTD Balance: \$25,168.64

Sandy Hook Fund (to be turned over to Sandy Hook): Balance: \$4,756.12

5. Public Comment:

None.

6. Adjournment:

Chris Orris made a Motion to Adjourn, seconded by Kim Karlin. The meeting was adjourned at 6:10p.m. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, December 3, 2013 at 5:30pm.